

Penelope's true meaning

Business



Odysseus, the Greek hero of *The Odyssey*, is not the only hero. His wife Penelope also holds an important role that changes the conflict. *The Odyssey* is a long epic poem about a hero's journey back home to his land, Ithaca, and what happens when he finally gets home. The Greek epic contains kleos, pathos, and nostros, and is a remarkable story. Some scholars argue that Penelope is a minor, futile character in *The Odyssey*; and they believe that her role is pointless. The other side of the spectrum is the idea that Penelope is the "female Odysseus."

"This group thinks of her as a character that has just as much arete as Odysseus. Through Penelope's guile and perfection, it's evident that the second side of the argument is true and proves Penelope to be an important character in the epic poem. Penelope's guile portrays her as the real hero of *The Odyssey*. Penelope uses her craftiness to devise a cunning, genius plan to trick the suitors. She knows she has to stay loyal to Odysseus, her faithful husband. Because of this, she tells the suitors that she will weave a pall and when she finishes she will decide which of the men to marry.

Her clever plan was that "each night she undid the days weaving" (Text 2), in hopes to stall her promise to the suitors. However, the suitors knew something was up "...they grew suspicious. A compliant servant revealed her mistresses' secret ploy" (Text 2). Even Antinous, one of the most haughty, rude suitors admits that Penelope has a "fine mind, and subtle wits too..." (Text 4). Although Penelope's plan eventually fails, her lie to the suitors does its job to hold off her vow of replacing Odysseus. Penelope's scheme extends her relationship with Odysseus, and keeps the theme of family and love intact.

When Penelope “ says she will marry the man who can string Odysseus’ bow and shoot an arrow” (line 1356), she introduces another example of her guile. This shows Penelope’s cleverness because she knows that this challenge is unbeatable, unless you’re Odysseus. Penelope is intelligent enough to not potentially give away her husband’s love with a wager. By stimulating this test, we know that Penelope is getting a vibe that Odysseus may be around in disguise. Penelope’s guile shows that she is the real hero of The Odyssey, when she uses a “ test to verify Odysseus was who he claimed to be” (Text 4). Odysseus has now proved to everyone in Ithaca who he is, except Penelope.

Penelope knows she can’t be unfaithful and must conjure a clever plan to make sure the beggar is really her husband. She tests Odysseus by saying that she moved their marriage bed. And he replies by saying, “ woman, by heaven you’ve stung me now! Who dared to move my bed” (line 1571)? After this, Penelope’s crafty test was complete and successful. This assessment demonstrates her cleverness because once again, she knew only Odysseus would solve the problem. Penelope’s guile in The Odyssey shows her value to the epic.

Perfection is one of Penelope’s major traits, that reflects her similarities to Odysseus; therefore, inaugurating her as the “ female Odysseus.” Penelope, unlike the other women of the Odyssey, is special; she is crucial to the storyline, is a role model, and is both physically attractive and manipulative. “ Simply put, she is perfect. Unlike the other models, her role is special” (Text 4). Also, Penelope and Odysseus have a model marriage, where their hearts and minds become one; and this also reflects her perfection.

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Because Penelope fits the idea of perfection, she is just like Odysseus; however, one is in the female form and one is in the male. Both of these antagonists hold the ideal customs for their sex. Penelope, “ possesses characteristics of both an ideal wife and an ideal lover” (Text 4), which makes her a perfect women for her husband. Odysseus too is perfect in his form, because he is the model of a Greek hero, showing resilient strength and clever intelligence. The couple is meant for each other based on this. When the author says, “ the two exhibit behavior, namely cunning, and suffering that us almost identical, showing the communion of their souls” (Text 4), he is showing how Penelope is the female Odysseus and how the two individuals are related.

Penelope’s perfection displays he relationship to Odysseus and how her trait represents herself. Penelope is a clear hero of the Odysseus and is a very important character. You may still ask, how is Penelope a hero, if she doesn’t have the strength of one? On a more literary note, Penelope is an extremely strong human; the amount of pain she has endured from her husband’s departure is almost unbearable. Also, if you think Penelope is not at all like Odysseus, you’re wrong because she is perfect just like him, and they have the qualities of Greek heroes. Through Penelope’s perfection and guile, she is the “ female Odysseus” and is a crucial character in the fate of the Odysseys’ storyline. Penelope shows her guile through her plan to delay the suitors, the challenge, and her test on Odysseus.

Her perfection is showed with the relation to Odysseus, her loving husband. Penelope displays pathos, kleos, and guile, therefore making her an well built analytical character She holds an important literary spot in The Odyssey that <https://assignbuster.com/penelopes-true-meaning/>

can only be understood by strong readers. Penelope is more than just a minor character; she impacts the plot of the story greatly, while maintaining the common Greek expectations, of a tight knit family. Penelope is vital to The Odyssey and the story would be completely different if she wasn't incorporated into the epic poem.